DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 650 TM 800 447

TITLE	Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3. Rationale and Content.
INSTITUTION	California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento. Office of Program Evaluation and Research.
PUB DATE	80
NOTE	80p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802 ($1.50)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Achievement Tests; *Elementary School Mathematics; Grade 3; *Multiple Choice Tests; Primary Education; *Reading Skills; *State Programs; Test Construction; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	California Assessment Program; *Survey of Basic Skills (California)

ABSTRACT

This publication was developed as a useful tool for school personnel in interpreting California Assessment Program (CAP) test results. The skills measured by the Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3 (an integral part of the CAP) are described. Rationale for test content specifications, methods of skill assessment, and activities conducted during the two-year test development process are discussed. Test development was based on two considerations: (1) the test would reflect the third grade curriculum of California public schools, and (2) the test would insure that assessment information would assist schools in identifying programmatic strengths and weaknesses. Reading, written language, and mathematics skills are described. The reading section contains questions from four skill areas: word identification, vocabulary, comprehension, and study locational skills. The language section contains questions from eight skill areas: word forms, standard English usage, language choices, sentence recognition, paragraphs, capitalization, puctuation, and spelling. The final section, mathematics, contains questions from seven skill areas: counting/place value, operations, nature of numbers, geometry, measurement, graphs, and problem analysis. Basic skill outcomes of good instructional programs are defined through illustrative test items and skill descriptions. (Author (GK)

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Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3

Rationale and Content

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California Assessment Program

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION · Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction · Sacramento, 1980

California Assessment Program

Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3

Rationale and Content

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MAY 1 1980

This publication, which was e..ted by the Bureau of Publications, California State Department of Education, and prepared by the Office of Program Evaluation and Research, was published by the Department, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814, and distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act.

1980

Copies of this publication are available for $1.50, plus sales tax for California residents, from Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802. A list of other publications which are available from the Department, *Selected Publications of the California State Department of Education,* may be obtained by writing to the same address.

Preface

A new test, the *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3,* has become an integral part of the California Assessment Program (CAP). In 1978 a major change was made in the primary grade testing program, which at that time included only testing in reading in grade three; new legislation required testing in language and mathematics in grade three. With the move to testing in the basic skills at the end of the third grade, the previously required testing of students in the second grade was eliminated, and the statewide assessment program entered a new phase.

Achievement testing in California public schools was first required by legislation in 1961. The California Assessment Program had its beginnings in two subsequent legislative acts, the Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act of 1965, which required testing in reading in grades one, two, and three; and the California State Testing Act of 1969, which required testing in the basic skills in grades six and twelve.

In 1972 new legislation changed the direction of the statewide testing program. The new law permitted the use of state-developed tests which could be administered on a matrix sampling basis. The California Assessment Program was designed to (1) be relevant to California schools; (2) cover the full range of instructional objectives; (3) provide program-diagnostic information at the local and state levels; and (4) require a minimum amount of testing time. The new program was fully implemented in the 1974-75 school year. The tests developed for the California Assessment Program were the *Entry Level Test* for grade one, a *Reading Test* for grades two and three, and the *Survey of Basic Skills* tests for grades six and twelve. The annual reports based on the results of these tests have revealed strengths and weaknesses at the school, district, and state levels.

In the designing of a *Survey of Basic Skills* for grade three, the underlying premise was that the results from the test should provide as much information as possible for schools to use for program improvement activities. In the process, the Department of Education was able to draw on extensive experience with matrix sampling testing and reporting of skill area results to districts.

The new test had to meet several criteria. For example, the test had to reflect what was being taught in California public schools, be based on California curriculum frameworks, and be comprehensive in scope. The purposes of these criteria were to ensure that a broad range of objectives would be covered and that a maximum amount of information could be reported back to districts. To help meet these criteria, the Department fully explored the latest research in measurement and consulted experts in the field of measurement and learning. A thorough test development process was undertaken involving California teachers as well as other school district personnel. The test items that were ultimately developed were based on well-defined test content specifications. This document contains an overview of these specifications and of the philosophy underlying the new test, which will be introduced in the spring of 1980.

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Introduction

The primary purpose of *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3—Rationale and Content* is to describe the skills that the *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* is designed to measure. The rationale for the test content specifications and the methods used to assess skills are discussed, and the activities that were conducted during the two-year test development process are highlighted.

Use of This Document

The real value of this publication lies in its usefulness to school personnel in interpreting California Assessment Program (CAP) test results. Generally, when the CAP results for a school are made available, the school personnel immediately ask, "How did we do?" This can be answered by studying the overall scores from a number of perspectives; for example, by comparing them with the results from earlier years. However, a more productive question might be, "How did we do in specific skill areas, such as sentence recognition?" If the scores for some skill areas are relatively lower than others, then the question should be, "Are the scores low enough and are the skill areas important enough to merit special attention and review—perhaps more emphasis or a change in instructional materials or techniques?" It is virtually impossible to answer this question, or decide what action to take, without a clear understanding of the skills being measured on the *Survey*.

This document is designed to help meet that need. The skill area definitions provided herein are meant to be descriptive but not excessively detailed. For additional information about the skill areas and the criteria used to construct the test items, the reader should consult *Test Content Specifications for Grade 3*.

Teaching and Testing

It is important that creative and effective teaching and learning practices be employed in efforts to improve pupils' skills. The sample test items included in this booklet are not provided for instructional use. The skill descriptions and illustrative test items are meant to "define" the basic skill outcomes of a good instructional program. Recommendations as to *how* those skills can best be taught are not included because methodology involves a much larger and more difficult question which each school principal and primary grade teacher must answer on the basis of the needs of the pupils. Any effort to raise test scores by using these and similar items in a drill-and-practice manner is a serious misuse of the materials, a probable waste of valuable instructional time, and therefore a disservice to the pupils. A practice test has been designed for use in preparing the pupils for the types of test items and formats that they will encounter on the *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3*.

The objective multiple-choice testing format is a valid and most efficient system for measuring pupils' understanding and competence; but it is not, of course, a substitute for good teaching. The instructional program must include as many opportunities as possible for pupils to learn to read by reading, to write by writing, and to build math competence by solving problems. Only then will there be a balance between teaching and testing, one that allows each pupil to build a foundation of basic literacy skills.

Rationale

The test development process for the new third grade CAP test was based on two primary considerations. First, every effort was made to ensure that the test would reflect the third grade curriculum commonly taught in public schools throughout California. Second, the test was designed to ensure that the third grade assessment information to be reported back to schools and districts would be as useful as possible in the identification of programmatic strengths and weaknesses. Essentially, all test development efforts can be traced back to these two overriding considerations as is illustrated in the following discussion.

Relevance to Instruction

The first step taken to ensure a match between the CAP test and California's basic skills curriculum was to reconvene committees of content area specialists in reading, language, and mathematics. Such committees have traditionally served in an advisory capacity to the Department in the creation of the reading, language, and mathematics assessment instruments. The content area specialists who served on the three advisory committees represented a cross section of geographical regions and educational institutions from across the state. The advisory committees served as the final decision-makers in the test development process.

Each of the content area committees began the task of test development with a thorough examination of the appropriate statewide curriculum framework (reading, mathematics, or English language). In each case the framework provided the guiding philosophy for the creation of test content specifications and assessment items. Also scrutinized in this process was the *County Course of Study*, which represented further elaborations of the goals and concepts discussed in the subject-area frameworks. The content area committees also relied heavily on content analyses of commonly used state-adopted third grade textbooks.

Lists of objectives with sample item formats were developed and refined. This process culminated in the drafting of preliminary sets of test content specifications, which served as blueprints throughout the item-writing process.

In December of 1978 every school district in California received an invitation from the Department to participate in the development of the new third grade CAP test. Approximately 300 districts agreed to participate in some phase of the test development process.

As soon as the preliminary sets of test content specifications were drafted, copies were mailed to those districts which had indicated a willingness to review them. Participating reviewers were asked to (1) rate each of the proposed skill areas in terms of the degree of emphasis that the district placed on it; and (2) indicate whether or not the given skill should be tested on the third grade CAP test.

This review included an extensive amount of content-specific detail in addition to broad skill-area information. For example, teachers were asked not only whether contractions, irregular verbs, and irregular noun plurals were typically taught by the end of the third grade but also *which* contractions, irregular verbs, and irregular noun plurals were routinely covered at this level. The advisory committees used these data from the field reviews to make final decisions about the skills to be included in the CAP's *Test Content Specifications*.

Teachers from across the state were then invited to write questions in accordance with the specifications. The item-writing phase of the test development process resulted in large pools of items for each of the content areas. The item pools were reviewed, refined, and checked for compliance with the specifications by the appropriate content-area committees and departmental staff.

The item pools were then subjected to several rounds of field review and field testing. During the preliminary field-testing phase, 330 participating teachers were asked to evaluate specific test items on the basis of these two questions: (1) To what degree have you emphasized the skill measured by this item by the end of grade three? (2) Should this item be retained, modified, or omitted?

These teacher-judgment data were then used by the advisory committees during the next test development phase, in which the committee members eliminated or modified unacceptable items. The items which survived this screening were then assigned to prototype test forms (following the matrix sampling design) and were subjected to a second and final field testing. This final round of field testing was

accompanied by additional reviews of the items by over 600 California teachers, who were asked to rate the various items as a final quality-control screening. All of these data were then considered by the advisory committees during the final selection of items for the *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3.*

Usefulness of the Test

The second major consideration in the test development effort was that the test results be useful to school personnel in evaluating and improving their instructional programs. It was determined that the results would be useful only if the following criteria were met:

1. The results must be reported in sufficient detail to permit identification of specific strengths and weaknesses. A single score for a content area, such as math, may be helpful in judging the overall success of a math program, but it does not indicate how the program can or should be improved.
2. The reporting categories, or skill areas, must be clearly described and must correspond to logical learning units, or strands, so that teachers can easily relate performance in a given skill area to the corresponding instructional component.
3. The test items themselves must be valid; that is, they must measure the actual skill or concept in question. The variety of potential barriers to creating valid test items is almost unending. Poorly worded directions, confusing item formats, poor test layout, uninteresting reading selections, passage independent comprehension items (items that one could answer without reading the accompanying passage), difficult vocabulary in the language and math sections, and cultural, sex, and linguistic bias are only a few of the obstacles that must be avoided. A number of analyses were conducted to be sure that the questions were "functioning" as intended.

A few of the steps that were taken to ensure the usefulness of the test findings are described below.

- The test was designed to produce the greatest amount of program-diagnostic information possible to report to districts and schools. A total of 90 reporting or skill areas were designated (29 for math, 27 for reading, and 34 for written language). Most schools will receive scores for each of these categories and a total score for each content area.

- The skill areas were defined so that the test would clearly reflect the impact of good instruction. For example, the area of capitalization was delineated so that each item would measure pupils' knowledge of only one capitalization convention at a time, and each of these was grouped into one of three clusters: persons, places, and days and months. Thus, there is every reason to expect that if children have been taught to capitalize the names of persons, places, and days and months, their achievement scores will reflect this.
- Care was taken to ensure that categories corresponded to logical learning units. In the area of reading, for example, "Drawing conclusions," was further divided into three subcategories: (1) "About characters"; (2) "From details"; and (3) "From overall meaning." Similarly, most of the math reporting categories included a skills component and an applications component. This breakdown was designed so that if a given school or district should discover a weakness in one of these areas, it could plan appropriate remedial efforts.
- A practice test was developed to familiarize pupils with the kinds of directions, questions, and item formats to be included on the final test.
- The vocabulary and syntax of all directions on the test were simplified as much as possible and checked for communicability in a wide variety of settings. Moreover, the directions on most of the language items were designed to be read aloud by the teacher to ensure doubly against any confounding effect from directions.
- Item formats were carefully selected to ensure congruence with the actual skill being assessed. For example, the language item formats were designed to simulate written production within the context of a multiple-choice format. On most language questions pupils are asked to select the missing letter, word, or sentence for a blank in a word, sentence, or paragraph.

  On the spelling items, pupils are asked to write the word on their booklets and then to select the missing letters needed for a blank in the word. Again, the purpose of this format is to simulate actual production and to avoid presenting children with misspelled words.

  The math item formats in a given skill area were deliberately varied to reflect the immense variety of ways that math problems are presented in textbooks used across the state.

- A variety of readability concerns was addressed on every section of the *Survey*. Math and language items were carefully monitored to keep the reading difficulty as low as possible.
- A work space was provided next to each of the math questions. This formatting feature was designed to ensure that math scores would reflect math achievement and to minimize the possibility of errors related to perceptual matching or motor skills.
- Special efforts were taken to ensure that the test items would actually measure the intended learning. For example, departmental staff, teachers, and testing experts carefully checked the reading comprehension items to be sure that none could be answered without the pupils' reading the accompanying test passage. Those items suspected of passage independence were then excluded.
- Several steps taken to eliminate linguistic, sex, and cultural biases were directly related to the goal of ensuring that the test would measure only the intended learning outcomes. These steps included (1) a series of in-depth reviews by linguists and representatives of ethnic minorities; and (2) a scrutiny of several statistical indexes designed to facilitate identification of bias which might be introduced as a result of ethnic, sex, linguistic, or socioeconomic variables.
- The distractors were written so that pupils would have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of skills without being misled by "tricky" alternatives.

Description of the Test

The *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* consists of 1,020 items covering the skill areas described in this publication. The test includes 270 reading items, 390 written language items, and 360 mathematics items. Under the matrix sampling technique, each pupil takes only a small portion of this comprehensive test. A practice test is provided so that pupils can become familiar with marking requirements, directions, and item formats.

The *Survey* has been divided into 30 unique forms. Each pupil takes one form made up of 13 written language items, 12 mathematics items, and nine reading items. The content areas appear in this order in every test booklet. Each test form contains items from all major skill areas, and a balance is maintained between easy and difficult items.

The language questions appear first in the test booklets since the directions for most of them are administered orally. Pupils work on their own on the remaining test items. Space for working the mathematics problems is provided adjacent to the math items in the test booklets. Each form includes only one reading passage, and all of the reading questions are derived from this selection. In this way, pupils are never asked to deal with reading skills apart from the context of a passage.

Reading

The reading section of the *Survey* contains questions from four broad skill areas: (1) word identification; (2) vocabulary, (3) comprehension; and (4) study locational skills. These skill areas reflect the emphases in the *Framework in Reading for the Elementary and Secondary Schools of California, County Course of Study,* and state-adopted reading textbooks commonly used at the third grade level.

Decisions about the relative emphasis and breadth of content for each of these skill areas were made by the Reading Assessment Advisory Committee, a group of reading specialists representing a cross section of geographical regions, institutions, instructional levels, and professional groups throughout California. In making these decisions, the committee members considered information from field reviews of preliminary test content specifications. The results indicated the degree of emphasis placed on each skill area and whether or not the skill should be assessed on the *Survey.* These field reviews reflected district, school, and teacher points of view.

After careful consideration of the reading framework and field review information, the reading committee decided that the area of comprehension should receive the greatest emphasis on the reading section of the *Survey.* This decision was also consistent with the state-adopted *Handbook for Planning an Effective Reading Program,* which includes the following statement: "Comprehension is the central goal of reading" (page 7). Thus, approximately 60 percent of the reading questions are literal or inferential comprehension items. Other features of the reading section of the *Survey* are highlighted below:

- The word identification questions are designed to assess a wide range of phonics and structural analysis skills. A variety of vowel and consonant sounds is tested within the phonics skill area. The structural analysis items assess pupils' understanding of prefixes, roots, suffixes, compound words, and contractions.
- The vocabulary items test (1) recognition of word meanings, including antonyms, synonyms, and definitions; and (2) the ability to use context to select the appropriate meaning of a word with multiple meanings (such as "saw" or "cold"). While context clues might be helpful in recognizing the meanings of the words in the first category, they *must* be used on the multiple meaning items, or pupils are likely to select the wrong word meaning.
- The comprehension items cover a wide variety of specific skills, including identifying details, identifying pronoun references, determining sequence, finding main ideas, inferring cause and effect relationships, and drawing conclusions. These skills were defined in precise and objectively describable terms so that the items would be the purest possible measure of each skill area. This concern with precision is perhaps best illustrated by the literal detail questions, which involve identifying details from a single sentence within a passage or from two or three sentences within a passage. Classifying the detail questions in this manner was, thus, an objectively definable process directly amenable to public inspection.
- The study locational items cover two skill areas: (1) using a table of contents; and (2) alphabetizing. Study locational items are the only reading items which are not based on a passage.
- All word identification and vocabulary items are based on words which are used and underlined in the test passage. This formatting feature was used to (1) enable children to use the context of a story in answering these questions; and (2) avoid fragmenting and isolating these skills from context. This approach reflects psycholinguistic research which has shown that children are more successful in identifying words in context than in isolation.
- All reading passages on the test were carefully controlled for readability. Readability was the primary consideration in the selection of size, color, and style of print; amount of blank space; and color of paper.
- In the comprehension items the actual language of the passage was used as much as possible. If this was not possible, words equal to the readability level of the passage or below the readability level of the passage were used. This was done to ensure that the degree of reading difficulty of the items would be consistent with that of the passage.

- A variety of high-interest reading passages representative of third grade reading materials was chosen for the *Survey*. A special study was conducted in which several groups of third graders were asked to evaluate an original pool of 80 passages on the basis of interest alone. The committee relied heavily on these evaluations in selecting the final 30 passages for the test. Additionally, a content analysis of the stories included in commonly used third grade state-adopted reading textbooks was used as a guide by the committee in selecting a representative assortment of passages. These encompassed fiction and nonfiction selections, including folktales and fables, biographical sketches, historical and scientific selections, and ethnically oriented passages designed to reflect the diverse cultural heritage of California.

The reading skill areas included on the test and some corresponding illustrative test questions are included on pages 7–13.

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3*

Passage A

The time is midnight. The full moon is high in the sky. Here and there a bonfire lights the beach. People are gathered around the fires, waiting. Suddenly, the beach is alive with thousands of wiggling fish as wave after wave carries them to shore. At once the people are splashing through the waves, snatching up the fish.

Does it sound like a wild story? It is not just a story. It is a grunion run, and it happens several times every year in southern California.

The grunion is a small, silvery fish that is between five and six inches long. The season for laying eggs is from the middle of February to early September. During those months, on the nights of the highest tide, the grunion swim to shore to lay their eggs in the sand. The next high tide uncovers the eggs. The baby grunion burst out like popcorn and ride the waves to sea.

Passage B

George woke up one bright Saturday morning feeling wonderful. He and Gloria were at last going to Disneyland.

After an hour's drive on the freeway, they were there!

The first thing they saw was Mickey Mouse leading his band to the railway station. Uncle John took a picture of the twins with Mickey Mouse.

"Let's go on the Matterhorn," shouted Gloria. "I'll sit here and watch," said Uncle John.

They climbed into a car, and soon they were at the top of the mountain. Then down they rushed, faster and faster, in and out of tunnels, flying like the wind.

All of a sudden they came to a stop. They were glad to be safely on the ground again!

They had many more exciting rides and saw lots of wonderful things.

As they rode home, tired but happy, they thanked Uncle John for a thrilling treat.

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
I. Word Identification	**60**		
A. Phonics	30		
1. Vowels	15	The student will identify a word which rhymes with a word used and underlined in a passage or will identify a word which contains the same tested vowel sound as a word used and underlined in a test passage.	Mark the word that rhymes with <u>moon</u>. o tin o tune o tan (See Passage A.) o tone
2. Consonants	15	The student will identify a word which rhymes with a word used and underlined in a passage or will identify a word which contains the same tested consonant sound(s) as a word used and underlined in a passage.	Mark the word that has the same sound as the <u>c</u> in <u>car</u>. o chose o circle (See Passage B.) o color o chick
B. Structural analysis	30		
1. Prefixes, suffixes, and roots	18	The student will identify (1) the way in which a suffix or prefix alters the meaning of a base word; (2) the root or base form of a tested regular verb (for example, hurried ⟶ hurry); and (3) the semantic association between an irregular past tense of a verb and its infinitive (for example, taught ⟶ teach).	In the word <u>faster</u>, the <u>er</u> makes the word mean o not as fast. o more fast. (See Passage B.) o just as fast. o less fast. The root (or base) of the word <u>wiggling</u> is o wig. o window. (See Passage A.) o wing. o wiggle.

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
			The word <u>woke</u> is closest in meaning to o work. o week. (See Passage B.) o wake. o walk.
2. Contractions and compound words	12	The student will identify the words which make up a contraction or compound word, both of which are used and underlined in a passage.	The two words in <u>popcorn</u> are o po + pcorn. o pop + corn. (See Passage A.) o popc + orn. o popco + rn. The word <u>I'll</u> means the same as o is all. o I will. (See Passage B.) o it will. o I fill.

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
II. Vocabulary	30		
A. Recognizing word meanings	16	The student will identify the definitions, synonyms, and antonyms of words which are used and underlined in a passage.	In this story, <u>shouted</u> means o watched. o climbed. (See Passage B.) o yelled. o pictured. The **opposite** of <u>high</u> is o small. o alive. (See Passage A.) o low. o tall.
B. Using context	14	The student will use the context of a passage to identify the meaning of a multiple-meaning word which is used and underlined in a passage.	In this story, <u>saw</u> means o a tool. o to cut wood. (See Passage B.) o a fun ride. o looked at.

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
III. Comprehension	**150**		
A. Literal	73		
1. Details	36		
a. From a single sentence	20	The student will identify the verbatim answer to a question which is derived entirely from a single sentence within a passage.	Who took a picture? o Uncle John o George (See Passage B.) o Mickey Mouse o Gloria
b. From two or three sentences	16	The student will identify the verbatim answer to a question which is derived from putting together two or three sentences within a passage.	Where were the people waiting? o in a boat o near a house (See Passage A.) o under a tent o on the beach
2. Pronoun references	18	The student will answer a question which involves identifying the antecedent of a pronoun.	Who saw Mickey Mouse? o the band o George and Gloria (See Passage B.) o the mountain men o Aunt Mary
3. Sequence	19	The student will answer a question which involves identifying the sequence of events, facts, or other elements in a passage.	Which **of these** does the story tell about **last**? o the bonfire o the baby grunion (See Passage A.) o laying eggs o the waiting people

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Inferential	77		
1. Main ideas	19	The student will identify the primary topic of a passage.	This story is mostly about o a ride in the car. o Uncle John. (See Passage B.) o a day at Disneyland. o the Matterhorn.
2. Cause and effect	20	The student will associate a cause with an effect.	Why were people waiting on the beach? o to ride on the waves o to cook the popcorn (See Passage A.) o to see the moon o to snatch up the fish
3. Drawing conclusions	38		
a. About characters	15	The student will draw a conclusion about the feelings or attitudes of a character(s).	At the beginning of the story, Gloria probably felt o sad. o angry. (See Passage B.) o excited. o disappointed.
b. From details	13	The student will draw a conclusion from a detail in a story.	You can tell from the story that baby grunion probably o will die in very deep water. o need to be taught to swim. o will lay five or six eggs. (See Passage A.) o can stay alive in deep water.
c. From overall meaning	10	The student will draw a conclusion from the overall meaning of a story.	This story tells about o a day of fun and excitement. o a day of hard work. (See Passage B.) o a night of worry and fear. o a night of quiet rest.

Skill Areas Assessed in Reading, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Concluded)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
IV. Study Locational	**30**		
A. Alphabetizing	15	The student will select from four words the one which comes first in alphabetical order.	Choose the word that comes **first** in ABC order. o net o rice o map o spot
B. Table of contents	15	The student will use a sample Table of Contents to find the page number of a story.	**Use the Table of Contents to answer the question below:** TABLE OF CONTENTS The Orange Clock . . . . . 2 The Purple Boat . . . . . 6 The Yellow Pail . . . . . 10 The Green Ribbon . . . . . 14 On which page would you find "The Purple Boat"? o page 2 o page 6 o page 10 o page 14

Written Language

The language section of the *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* contains questions from eight skill areas: (1) word forms; (2) standard English usage; (3) language choices; (4) sentence recognition; (5) paragraphs; (6) capitalization; (7) punctuation; and (8) spelling. These skills correspond to many of the language content area topics in the *English Language Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* and the *County Course of Study* as well as the major written language skills covered in state-adopted language textbooks commonly used in California's third grade classrooms.

The relative emphasis and breadth of content covered in each of the eight skill areas was decided on by the English Language Assessment Advisory Committee, which is composed of language arts experts representing a cross section of instructional levels and institutions from across the state.

The committee members considered the following sources of information during the test development process:

1. Content analyses of commonly used third grade language textbooks adopted by the State Board of Education
2. Field reviews of skill area compilations (written at the finest level of detail) in which teachers and curriculum specialists indicated the degree of emphasis they assigned to each skill area and whether or not the skill in question should be assessed on the *Survey*
3. Reviews in which teachers judged each language item as to the degree of instructional emphasis placed on that particular skill and whether the item should be retained, modified, or omitted

Wherever possible, the language items were written to simulate actual production of written language as much as possible within the restrictions of a multiple-choice testing format. Consequently, almost all of the language items require pupils to select needed letters, words, or sentences for a blank in a word, sentence, or paragraph.

Furthermore, the items were written to reflect as closely as possible the tasks required of pupils in their everyday classroom lessons. For example, several items on the test are intended to assess the pupils' ability to use homophones (such as a choice of "to," "two," and "too" for the sentence, "I have __ feet.") In most textbooks pupils are asked only to discriminate between the homophones in question. Therefore, these items encompass only those choices which are normally taught and not additional distractors. This strategy was used to develop instructionally sensitive items by (1) ensuring that such items would be a pure measure of only the skill in question; and (2) focusing on the exact mental discriminations required of pupils in their daily classwork.

Other special features of the language section of the *Survey* are highlighted below:

- The skill area receiving the greatest degree of emphasis is sentence recognition. Most of these items require pupils to supply a needed subject or verb for a blank in a sentence (without conscious identification of the grammatical terms). Other sentence recognition items require pupils to discriminate between statements and questions.
- The word form items require pupils to use prefixes, suffixes, irregular noun plurals, and contractions in the context of a sentence.
- The standard English usage items require pupils to use irregular verbs and pronouns and to achieve agreement in number between subject and verb and between noun determiners (such as "this," "that," and "these") and the nouns they modify.
- The language choice items assess the pupils' ability to (1) select the most specific word in a group of words; and (2) identify descriptive words which appeal to a given sense.
- On the items assessing paragraph skills, pupils must supply a sentence for a blank in a paragraph. (The sentence to be provided is a missing topic sentence, a sentence containing supporting detail, or a needed sequential element.)
- The capitalization items require pupils to select for a blank in a sentence the words which are correctly capitalized. This format design was intentional so that pupils would be selecting the correct response rather just identifying a mistake.

- The punctuation items require pupils to select the needed punctuation for a sentence. These items cover the common uses of periods, question marks, commas, and apostrophes. As with the capitalization skill area, the punctuation items require pupils to find the right option (rather than the wrong one).
- The spelling items require pupils to write the word in their booklets and then select the letters missing from blanks in the partially written word. The purpose of this format is to simulate actual spelling production as much as possible and to avoid presenting children with misspelled words. Most of the spelling items assess pupils' knowledge of words which follow predictable and generalizable spelling patterns. The spelling content area was deliberately organized in this way to reflect sound instructional practices in the area of spelling.
- The directions for almost all of the language items are to be read aloud by the teacher so as to minimize any possible interference from written directions. Those few items which do have written directions are included on the practice test to familiarize students with them prior to the actual testing.
- The sentences used to provide necessary context in the language items were written with a carefully controlled vocabulary so as to minimize any possible interference because of reading difficulty. All the words used in the language items were designated as being at the first, second, or third grade level on a graded vocabulary list.

The written language skill areas addressed on the test and some illustrative test questions are included on pages 16–24.

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3*

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
I. Word Forms	66		
A. Prefixes	14	The student will select a prefix (such as un-, pre-, and dis-) for a word in a sentence which provides a context clue for the appropriate prefix.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. He cried because he was so ___happy. o pre o un o ex o re
B. Inflectional suffixes	12	The student will select the appropriate inflectional suffix (-s, -'s, -ed, -ing, -er, -est) for a word in a given sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. Yesterday the girls _____. o walks o walked o walking o walk
C. Derivational suffixes	11	The student will select the appropriate derivational suffix (-ly, -er, -ful, -ness, -less) for a word in a given sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. The flowers are beauti___. o ful o ness o ly o er

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
D. Irregular noun plurals	14	The student will select the appropriate irregular noun plural (such as children, mice, knives) for a blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. We saw three _____. o mouse o mouses o mice o mices
E. Contractions	15	The student will select the correct way of writing a contraction for two words presented and underlined in a sentence.	There is a short way to write the underlined words in the sentence. Choose the correct one. This looks like my dog, but it <u>is not</u>. o isnot o is'nt o isn't o isnt
II. Standard English Usage	60		
A. Irregular verbs	15	The student will select the appropriate form of an irregular verb for a blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. Juan has _____ a story about horses. o wrote o write o written o writed

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills*: Grade 3 (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Pronouns	15	The student will select the correct pronoun for a blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. ___ went for a ride. o Us o Him o Her o We
C. Subject-verb agreement	16	The student will select the verb form which agrees in number with the subject of the sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. Every day, Martin _____ to school. o have walked o walks o walk o were walking
D. Noun determiners	14	The student will select the appropriate noun determiner for a blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. ____ children broke the toy. o This o One o That o Those

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
III. Language Choices	**30**		
A. Sensory words	15	The student will select the word which appeals to a given sense for a blank in a sentence.	Choose the word that tells you how the cat would **feel** if **touched**. The cat was ____. o black o furry o loud
B. Specific words	15	The student will select the most specific word for a blank in a sentence.	Choose the one that tells **exactly** what Joe lost. Joe lost a ____. o toy o thing o boat
IV. Sentence Recognition	**75**		
A. Statements and questions	15	The student will select the word ordering of a sentence which will form a question (or statement).	Choose the one which will make a **question**. ___ ___ ___ to the store? o Go did Mary o Did Mary go o Mary did go Choose the one which will make a **telling** sentence. ___ ___ ___ the ring. o Has he lost o He has lost o Has lost he

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Complete sentences	60		
1. Supplying verbs	30	The student will select the word group which supplies a verb needed to form a complete sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the words which are needed to form a complete sentence. Sometimes Dan ___ ___ ___. o down the street o in the class o runs to school o to the teacher
2. Supplying subjects	30	The student will select the word group which supplies a subject needed to form a complete sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the words which are needed to form a complete sentence. _____ _____ peanut shells at the people. o Have thrown o Monkeys threw o Were throwing o To throw
V. Paragraphs	**30**		
A. Topic sentences	15	The student will select a topic sentence for a blank at the beginning of a paragraph.	The teacher says: The paragraph in box number eight needs a sentence in the blank. Read the paragraph, and mark the bubble next to the sentence which goes best with the rest of the paragraph. _____. He has two new sweaters. He also has a cap. The cap looks nice with the sweaters. o Pablo has some new clothes. o Pablo goes to school. o Pablo loves to cook. o Pablo is eight years old.

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Details and sequence	15	The student will select a sentence which provides a relevant detail (or needed sequential element) for a blank in a paragraph.	The teacher says: The paragraph in box number eight needs a sentence in the blank. Read the paragraph, and mark the bubble next to the sentence which goes best with the rest of the paragraph. Penny has some pet rats. She also has a cat. _____ o Joe and Jane are reading about a horse. o The rats bit Penny's cat on the nose. o It is dark deep down in the sea. o Pete wants a stuffed animal for his birthday. The teacher says: The paragraph in box number eight needs a sentence in the blank. Read the paragraph, and mark the bubble next to the sentence which goes best with the rest of the paragraph. Jan stepped in some mud. _____ _____ Then she put them on a tree to dry. Two days later, she found a bird nest in one boot. o The bird had three babies. o She washed her boots. o It was a big nest.
VI. Capitalization	**30**		
A. Persons	10	The student will select the correctly capitalized words (such as initials and names of persons and animals) for the blanks in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one that is capitalized correctly. ___ ___ ___ are twins. o lucy and larry o Lucy and larry o lucy and Larry o Lucy and Larry

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Places	10	The student will select the correctly capitalized words (such as geographical locations, street names, and rivers) for the blanks in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one that is capitalized correctly. We are moving to ___ ____. o San diego o san diego o san Diego o San Diego
C. Days and months	10	The student will select the correctly capitalized words (such as days of the week, months of the year, and holidays) for the blanks in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one that is capitalized correctly. We are going skating on ____ ____. o Saturday or Sunday o saturday or Sunday o saturday or sunday o Saturday or sunday
VII. Punctuation	30		
A. Periods and question marks	10	The student will select the word with the correct punctuation (involving abbreviations and the final word in a sentence) for the blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one with the correct punctuation mark. Today is the first day of ____ o school o school. o school, o school?

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Commas	10	The student will select the word with the correct punctuation (involving commas in dates and items in a series) for the blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one with the correct punctuation mark. We planted _____ trees, and bushes. o flowers' o flowers o flowers. o flowers,
C. Apostrophes	10	The student will select the correctly punctuated word (involving apostrophes in contractions and singular possessives) for the blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one with the correct punctuation mark. Mary ____ stay for dinner. o can't o cant o ca'nt o ca,nt
VIII. Spelling	**69**		
A. Predictable words	39	The student will (1) write the word; and (2) select the letter(s) needed to spell a predictable word correctly.	The teacher says: Write out the word with the missing letters on the dotted line. (Pause.) Now choose the letter or letters needed to spell the word correctly, and fill in the bubble next to the one you choose. I like to climb tr__ s. ..... o ee o ea o ie o ei

Skill Areas Assessed in Written Language, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Concluded)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Words with suffixes	16	The student will (1) write the word; and (2) select the letters needed to form a word with a predictably spelled suffix.	The teacher says: Write out the word with the missing letters on the dotted line. (Pause.) Now choose the letter or letters needed to spell the word correctly, and fill in the bubble next to the one you choose. I gave both bab__ their toys. o ys o eys o ees o ies
C. Demons and homophones	14	The student will (1) write the word; and (2) select the letters needed to spell an unpredictable word correctly; or the student will select the correct homophone for a blank in a sentence.	The teacher says: Write out the word with the missing letters on the dotted line. (Pause.) Now choose the letter or letters needed to spell the word correctly, and fill in the bubble next to the one you choose. I only hit him __nce. o ou o wu o o o wo The teacher says: Fill in the bubble next to the one which completes the sentence correctly. __ not very hot today. o Its o It's

Mathematics

The mathematics section of the *Survey* contains questions from seven skill areas: (1) counting and place value; (2) operations; (3) nature of numbers and properties; (4) geometry; (5) measurement; (6) patterns and graphs; and (7) problem analysis and models. These skill areas closely match the strands discussed in the *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, the *County Course of Study*, and the content outline of mathematics textbooks commonly used at the third-grade level.

The relative emphasis and the breadth of content covered in each of the seven skill areas assessed on the *Survey* was decided on by the Mathematics Assessment Advisory Committee. In making their decisions, the committee members looked at three main sources of data: (1) reviews from districts indicating how much emphasis they placed on each skill and whether the skill should be assessed on the *Survey;* (2) reviews by third grade classroom teachers; and (3) the actual performance of a large sample of third grade pupils. These data were collected from the circulation of the draft version of *Test Content Specifications* and the field testing of large pools of items.

The committee members expected that in California the range and depth of content covered in classrooms would vary substantially. To their surprise the variations were not as great as expected. In fact, the degree of emphasis placed on such skills as counting, numeration, basic facts, operations, and patterns was remarkably similar among districts. The main variations in emphasis were found in the skills of geometry and measurement. In the final analysis the relative emphasis placed on various skill areas was approximately the same as that indicated on the review questionnaires by most districts.

Other relevant features of the mathematics section of the test are summarized below.

- An overriding criterion for all test items was that the items were to reflect third grade classroom instruction. Even test items that proved to be very easy (for example, those dealing with basic facts) were not excluded from the test. This procedure allows the test to be useful for diagnosis of strengths or weaknesses in pupil achievement.
- The test reflects a broad curriculum, with heavy emphasis on counting, numeration, basic facts, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and patterns. These skills comprise 75 percent of the mathematics test.
- Skills in geometry and measurement received relatively little emphasis; only as many items as are necessary to report a reliable score for these skills are included.
- Approximately two-thirds of the test assesses skills in computation; the other third of the test involves story problems (problem solving). All story problems are written in short, simple sentences; and to the degree possible the vocabulary is limited to third grade level or below. The story and the question portion of the problem are separated to improve readability. The language structure of each item was carefully screened for bias on the basis of sex, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group membership.
- A very small number of the story problems (15 out of 120) are devoted to analysis and models. In these questions pupils are not required to find the solutions to problems; instead, they are required to analyze the problems to determine what is given or asked for or to set up the problems as mathematical sentences whose solutions will be the correct answer. A few questions also require pupils to formulate a mathematical sentence from a picture model. The remaining story problems (105 out of 120) involve simple, more direct solutions to the problems.
- In measurement the questions relate to both U.S. Customary and metric units. The test contains twice as many questions on metric measurement as on U.S. Customary units. Field review data indicated that pupils are instructed in the use of both U.S. Customary and metric units
- The committee investigated the use of manipulatives during field testing. It was found that students do as well with a ruler pictured with the object to be measured as they do with separate paper rulers. Therefore, carefully field-tested illustrations are employed in the test. Pictures of other objects, such as cones, spheres, coins, thermometers, and scales are also used.

- The mathematics questions are written in several formats so that pupils exposed to different textbooks have ample opportunity to reflect their achievement.
- Space is provided in the test booklet (next to the questions) for students to work the problems.

The mathematics skill areas included on the test and some illustrative test questions are provided on pages 27–34.

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3*

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
I. Counting and Place Value	**45**		
A. Skills	30	The student will identify ordinal positions; identify the word form of a standard numeral; count by 1s, 2s, 5s, or 100s; recognize equivalent numbers in standard numeral form and in expanded notation; and find the place value of a given digit in a numeral, or identify the digit of a given place value.	600 + 10 + 3 = o 316 o 600103 o 60013 o 613 3204 The number 4 is in the _____ place. o ones o tens o hundreds o thousands
B. Applications	15	The student will apply his or her knowledge of place value skills in the context of word problems.	Mary is the sixth person in line. You are behind Mary. You are the _____ person in line. o first o fifth o sixth o seventh
II. Operations	**155**		
A. Basic facts	25	The student will identify basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.	7 + 5 o 2 o 11 o 12 o 13

(Examples continued on next page)

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
			$3\overline{)15}$ o 315 o 18 o 12 o 5
B. Addition	30	The student will identify the sum of two or three numbers.	12 8 + 23 o 16 o 33 o 43 o 62
			165 + 308 o 473 o 472 o 464 o 437
C. Subtraction	30	The student will identify the difference of two numbers.	79 −32 o 46 o 47 o 65 o 111

(Examples continued on next page.)

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
			417 −283 o 134 o 200 o 234 o 274
D. Multiplication	30	The student will identify the product of two or three numbers.	45 X 2 o 50 o 80 o 90 o 180 2 X 1 X 4 = o 6 o 7 o 8 o 24
E. Applications	40		
1. Basic facts	14	The student will apply his or her knowledge of basic facts in the context of word problems.	Bob has 3 pencils. Robbie has 8 pencils. How many more pencils does Robbie have than Bob? o 4 o 5 o 11 o 24

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

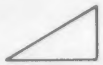
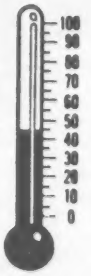
Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
2. Addition/subtraction	15	The student will apply his or her knowledge of addition/subtraction skills in the context of word problems.	Paul has 246 stamps. Lisa has 408 stamps. How many stamps do Paul and Lisa have? o 644 o 652 o 654 o 6414
3. Multiplication	11	The student will apply his or her knowledge of multiplication skills in the context of word problems.	There are 4 trees. There are 86 birds on each tree. How many birds are there? o 90 o 272 o 324 o 344
III. Nature of Numbers and Properties	**45**		
A. Properties and relationships	15	The student will identify counting patterns; use the commutative and associative properties; multiply a number by 0; compare numbers with the signs $<$, $>$, and =; and recognize even and odd numbers.	$33 \times 0 =$ o 0 o 30 o 33 o 330 $(0 + 6) + 1$ is the same as: o $0 + (7 + 1)$ o $7 + (0 + 2)$ o $(0 \times 6) \times 1$ o $0 + (6 + 1)$

(Examples continued on next page.)

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
			Which is an even number? o 9 o 7 o 5 o 4
B. Money and fractions	15	The student will identify names of coins, recognize the value of one or several coins, identify decimal notation from words for money, identify equivalent coins for cent notation of money, and identify fractional parts of geometric figures.	How much is this? o 80¢ o 75¢ o 60¢ o 15¢
C. Applications	15	The student will apply his or her knowledge of nature of numbers and properties in the context of word problems.	George marked the score chart like this: (12) 13 (14) 15 (16) 17 (18) 19 (20) 21 (22) 23 (24) 25 (26) 27 (28) 29 (30) 31 The chart shows counting by: o 2 o 3 o 5 o 7
IV. Geometry	**30**		
A. Skills	20	The student will identify two- and three-dimensional basic shapes, parallel lines, line segments, right angles, diagonals of quadrilaterals, diameters of circles, and congruent figures.	This shape is a: o square o circle o rectangle o triangle

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Applications	10	The student will identify coordinates of points of a coordinate grid and apply his or her knowledge of geometric skills in the context of word problems.	This is the Smith's tent. Which is the same shape and size as the shaded part of the tent? o  o o o
V. Measurement	**40**		
A. Linear measures	15	The student will measure objects linearly using nonstandard or standard units, estimate lengths of objects or parts of the body, change one standard unit to another within the system, identify the most appropriate unit of length, and determine the perimeter of a polygon.	How many inches in a yard? o 36 o 24 o 12 o 6
B. Other measures	15	The student will identify the most appropriate unit of mass, determine the area of a polygon, identify the correct time, identify the correct order of days of the week and months of the year, read and interpret a calendar and a thermometer, determine the volume of a three-dimensional object in nonstandard units, and determine the heavier of two masses.	The temperature is: o 35 degrees o 40 degrees o 45 degrees o 50 degrees 

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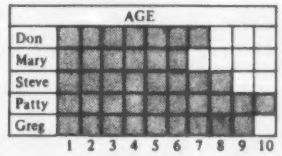
Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Continued)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
C. Applications	10	The student will apply his or her knowledge of measurement skills in the context of word problems.	 What time will it be in 3 hours? o 3:15 o 2:45 o 3:45 o 4:45
VI. Patterns and Graphs	30		
A. Skills	15	The student will identify the function rule, complete a function table, identify a geometric pattern, and recognize a number pattern.	▲ ■ 1 5 3 7 5 9 2 6 In the table above, the rule is: o Add 2 o Add 3 o Subtract 3 o Add 4

Skill Areas Assessed in Mathematics, *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 3* (Concluded)

Skill Area	*Number of Items*	*Description of Skill Area*	*Illustrative Test Question*
B. Applications	15	The student will apply his or her knowledge of patterns and graphs in the context of word problems.	Look at the graph.  Who is the oldest? o Mary o Greg o Patty o Don
VII. Analysis and Models	15	The student will read a story and find the facts in the story, missing information, or the question being asked; and the student will match a picture model with a mathematical sentence or a statement.	Mary has 3 dolls. Sue has 2 trucks. Bill has 1 doll. How many dolls are there? ..... What facts will help you answer the question? o 3 dolls and 2 trucks o 2 trucks and 1 doll o 3 dolls o 3 dolls and 1 doll 10 balloons 5 students How many balloons for each student? ..... How can you find the answer? o 10 + 5 = 15 o 10 − 5 = 5 o 10 × 5 = 50 o 10 ÷ 5 = 2

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